

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

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Tsunami Test

Dozens of nations joined the first ever Pacific-wide test of a tsunami-warning system, while earthquakes shook the geologically unstable region.

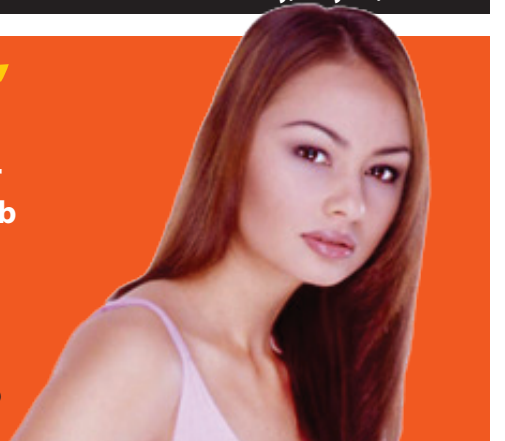
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'Are you a maid?'

This is one question that former MTV VJ Donita Rose has to answer almost every time she boards a cab in Singapore.

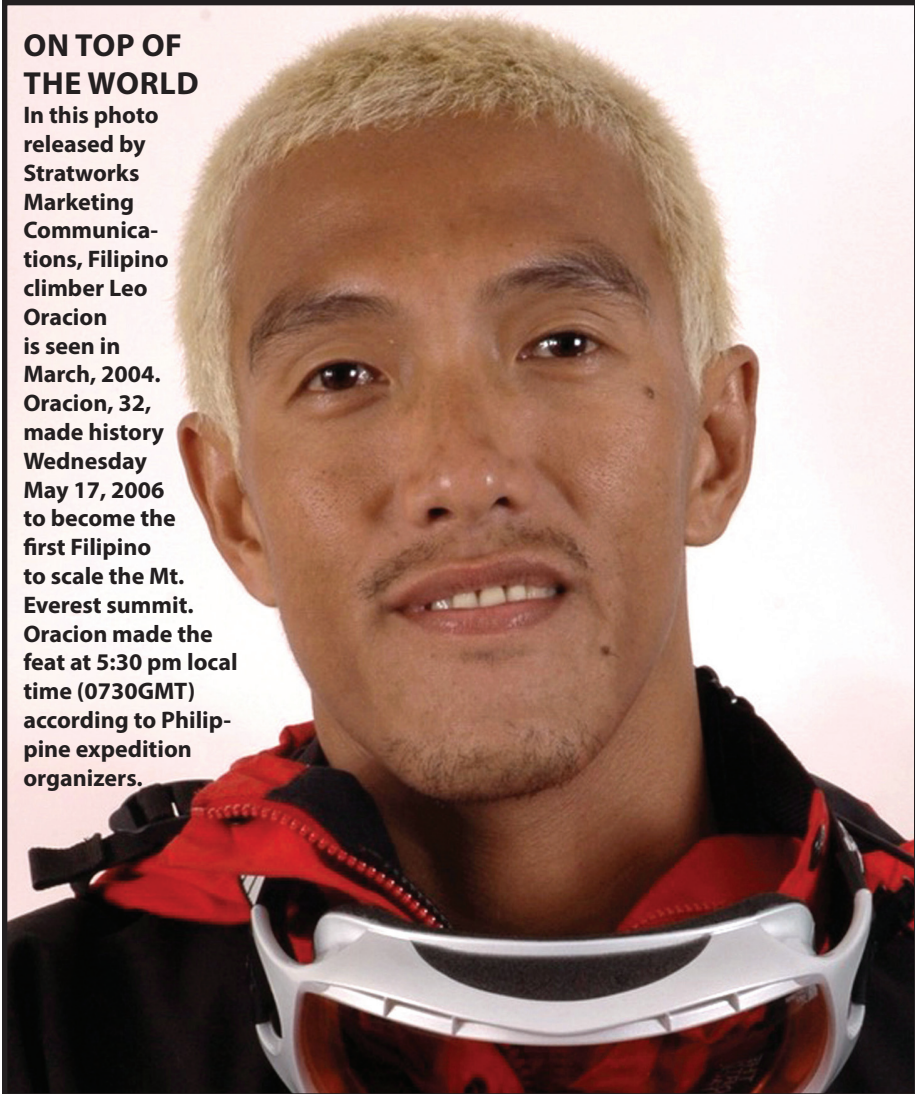
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2nd Filipino climber reaches summit of Mount Everest

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

In this photo released by Stratworks Marketing Communications, Filipino climber Leo Oracion is seen in March, 2004. Oracion, 32, made history Wednesday May 17, 2006 to become the first Filipino to scale the Mt. Everest summit. Oracion made the feat at 5:30 pm local time (0730GMT) according to Philippine expedition organizers.



By ALCUIN PAPA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Mountaineer Erwin Emata on Thursday became the second Filipino to reach the summit of Mount Everest, less than a day after his compatriot hoisted the Philippine flag on the peak and won the nation's praises, organizers said.

Emata, 32, set foot on the world's highest peak at 23:34 GMT Wednesday (5:34 a.m. Thursday Nepal time), First Philippine Mount Everest Expedition leader Arturo Valdez told ABS-CBN television from the Everest Base Camp. ABS-CBN is a sponsor of the climb.

Cheers broke out among the Filipino members when Emata radioed that he reached the 8,850-meter (29,035-foot) summit, the report said.

Valdez said Emata's first words were "Sir, it's really cold here."

Adventure racer Leo Oracion, 32, was the first Filipino to scale the top Wednesday, according to the organizers and Nepal's Tourism Ministry.

"The conquest of the world's highest peak is a mark of Filipino excellence, perseverance and courage in braving the hard trek of nation-building," Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said in a congratulatory note.

"Pinoy (Filipino) on top of the world," the Philippine Daily Inquirer said in a banner headline.

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3rd Filipino climber on track for 1-2-3 finish

By Luige A. del Puerto, Tony S. Bergonia
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Romi Garduce reached Camp 4 on Mount Everest yesterday afternoon and will push on toward the summit at 8 p.m., Nepal

time, according to his local contacts.

"Romi reached Camp 4 at 1:55 p.m. Nepal time (3:55 p.m. in Manila)," said Ramir Orteza, head of GMA Network Channel 7's News and Public Affairs and Corporate Publicity. "He says the wind is

getting stronger, compared to the last two days."

Orteza dismissed a report that Garduce had been struck with fever, which was why he was lagging behind fellow moun-

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A.J. BALDEVIA

Music in his veins

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Marianas Music Video producer A.J. Baldevia has music running through his veins and it's giving him visions of the entire island bopping to a pulsating beat.

Baldevia and his partners put up Marianas Multimedia a couple of years ago to provide local artists with a venue to pursue a career in the music industry.

He handles all production issues, while partners Frank Pangelinan and Edward and Shirl Camacho take care of the business side.

The company produces MMV, a television program featuring local music videos. Some have called it Saipan's MTV.

"Our goal here is to localize international appeal. Everything on the show is original, including the music and the production. A lot of artists who work with us are motivated and we want to offer them an opportunity to get a multi-dimensional kind of exposure," Baldevia says in an interview.

He laments that island music at present is too mechanized, almost lifeless. It is his hope to get artists out of their comfort zone and help "take local music to the 21st century."

Local artists, he adds, need encouragement to become a little bit more original and in touch with who they are and where they come from.

Born in the Philippine city of Iloilo, Baldevia himself has not forgotten his origin. Although he left the Philippines at the early age of five and describes himself as a student of Cham-

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A.J. Baldevia



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PINOYNEWS

Sept. deadline set for Gulf War claims

By **MARCONI CALINDAS**
REPORTER

The Philippine Consulate Office in the CNMI is announcing the availability of the list of at least 817 Gulf War claims of overseas Filipino workers who were affected during the 1990 Iraq-Kuwait War.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs announced early this May that the United Nations Compensation Commission Governing Council in Geneva, during its 56th Session, that has set Sept. 30, 2006 the deadline for locating and paying Gulf War claimants.

Philippine Claims and

Compensation Committee Secretariat Secretary General Minda C. Cruz stated that based on the PCCCS records, there are still Gulf War claimants who have not coordinated with PCCCS despite the efforts to reach them through mail, saturation drives within the Philippines and abroad and

assistance of Philippine Foreign Service Posts. She said that PCCCS is now calling on these claimants to coordinate with the office at the soonest possible time.

"These claimants must coordinate with PCCCS before the set deadline because after Sept. 30, 2006, UNCC will

no longer entertain Philippine government's requests for the return of funds to be paid to applicants whose claims have already been approved by the UNCC," Cruz said.

All OFWs who were affected by the war in Iraq and Kuwait in 1990 and who have claims approved by the UNCC

must call the office in the Philippines at 832-5303 or visit her office at the 3rd floor of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pasay City so they can find out if they are included in the UNCC list of approved claims. The list of the approved claims is also available at the Philippine Consulate Office.

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Valdez said it took Emata seven hours and 49 minutes to climb the summit from Camp 4, located 7,926 meters (26,000 feet) from the base of the mountain, and less than five hours to return to the camp.

Both Oracion and Emata are members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition. From Camp 4, Oracion reached the peak in 15 hours.

Pemba Dorje Sherpa of Nepal set the record for the fastest ascent from Everest's Base Camp to the summit at eight hours and 10 minutes on May 21, 2004.

Oracion and Emata, both 32, are now at Camp 2 (6,400 meters or 21,000 feet) where the FPMEE had stocked food and equipment. At noon today, they are expected to reach Base Camp (5,400 meters or 17,700 feet) and to partake of a special meal prepared by other FPMEE members.

Upon reaching the summit,

Emata immediately radioed FPMEE expedition leader Arturo Valdez at Base Camp.

Emata, who was among 60 other climbers mostly from Spain, was the first in the group to make it to the top.

"Pastor's time is really above average," Butch Sebastian, co-leader of the FPMEE expedition, told the Inquirer.

"He is really a strong climber," Sebastian said, adding:

"Our preparations and training really helped. He had an early start, so he was able to get ahead of his group. Also, he is in great condition, and he had a lot of determination."

Sebastian also noted that unlike Oracion who had to deal with a bottleneck of climbers along the trail, Emata was not held up by "traffic."

Also, Sebastian said, by the time Emata began the final leg of his climb, the fixed rope lines from Camp 4 to the summit had been put in place. In Oracion's case, he had to wait for Sherpas to set up the lines.

Not complete without Garduce

In a phone patch interview with reporters at the National Sports Grille in Greenbelt, Makati City, Valdez called for prayers for another Filipino climber, Romi Garduce, who is also attempting to scale Everest.

"The Philippine expedition to Everest in 2006 will not be complete if Romi will not make it to the summit and back safely," said Valdez, a former transportation undersecretary.

Valdez also said that as a former president of the Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines Inc., he was "looking forward" to the success of Garduce.

"All Filipino mountaineers should be able to accomplish their objectives. We would like Filipinos to be in good safe hands," he added.

Garduce is principally backed by the broadcast network GMA 7, and Oracion and Emata by ABS-CBN.

OWWA to conduct free health screening

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration is informing the Filipino community in the CNMI of a free health screening scheduled this June 4, 2006, from 9am to 12noon at the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe.

Individuals who would like to avail of blood sugar testing should fast (no food or water) from midnight of June 3, 2006, up to the time of their check up.

Also, OWWA is informing the Filipino

community that the English Developmental Course Batch II will start this May 21, 2006. The course will include grammar, vocabulary development, conversational English, phonics, and writing. The last day for registration was yesterday May 19, 2006.

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration welfare officer Mary Dait said the health screening is in line with the upcoming celebration of the Migrant Workers' Day on June 7, 2006. *(Marconi Calindas)*

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taineers Leo Oracion and Erwin "Pastor" Emata.

"I don't think that's true," Ortez said. "Romi is OK. His summit assault starts tonight at 8 p.m. He is aware of [Oracion and Emata's achievement] and is happy for the two climbers. It has never been a race for him. That's why he chose to stick to his schedule."

Ortez added that what was most important was the climber's safety.

GMA 7's news site, www.gmanews.tv, said Garduce was "expected to make it to the summit on Friday."

Ortez quoted Garduce as saying in Filipino: "I am happy for the success of Leo Oracion and Erwin Emata. It has never been my intention to engage in a race. I have proceeded according to my plan and my pace. I chose my own pace so that we would be dispersed and Filipinos would have a bigger chance [to make it to the peak]."

Rivalry

The expeditions of Garduce and of Oracion and Emata had been hyped up as another point of rivalry between the two giant networks, GMA 7 and ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

Asked if there was a perception or feeling within GMA 7

that the network had "lost" this competition, Ortez laughed.

"We have never treated this as a competition," Ortez said, adding that GMA 7 was supportive of Garduce because it was a sponsor of his climb.

Whoever got to the summit first would be great news for the country all the same, he added.

Garduce left for Nepal in March to give himself enough time to acclimatize to the harsh conditions on Everest (29,035 feet or 8,850 meters).

Not commercial climb

He climbed Tibet's Mt. Cho Oyu (26,906 feet) in September 2005. On Jan. 1 of that year, he became the first Filipino to climb Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina, at 22,831 feet the highest mountain in the Western hemisphere.

Oracion and Emata's reconnaissance climb was part of the preparations of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE), which plans to scale the mountain next year.

Butch Sebastian, who started forming the team with then Transportation Undersecretary Art Valdez in 2004, said the idea to climb Everest came up in 2003.

At that time, he said, the team organizers had two choices, the easier of which was to take the "commercial climb."

Mountaineers with experience in high-altitude ascents

have the option of paying \$70,000 each to climb with professionals in Nepal for a guided climb of Everest.

In a commercial climb, ropes, clips and other equipment needed to reach the summit would be set up, and all the mountaineer would have to do is just "clip on and use the ropes."

"In other words, it's spoon-fed," said Sebastian, previous president of the Federation of Philippine Mountaineers Association.

"We didn't want the commercial climb. We wanted an organized setup," he said.

Training climbs

Sebastian said the team wanted its members trained in climbs of various mountains in preparation for the assault on Everest.

It was agreed that during the training climbs, the team would decide which of its members would be the fittest to scale the world's highest mountain, he said.

The team's next training climb is on Mt. Denale in Alaska, said to be North America's tallest peak, Sebastian said.

The plan to scale Everest next year involves two teams of eight pushing toward the summit from two sides -- one team coming from Tibet and the other from Nepal.

The teams will set off at the same time and meet at the summit to achieve the goal of a "unity climb," Sebastian said.

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FROM PAGE 1

orro culture for 30 years, Baldevia remains fluent in his original dialect—Ilongo. He could also carry on a conversation in Tagalog if he has to.

The combination of music and video is yet another language through which Baldevia communicates.

"Music and video is a power-

ful medium that can enable artists to communicate to the rest of the world how unique they are," he says.

MMV is the culmination of Baldevia's lifelong work in media, which includes broadcasting, performing, songwriting, concert organizing, and even publishing an arts and music magazine on Guam.

But his work is far from done: "I want to see MMV

go 24 hours, seven days a week, featuring local artists, entertainment features, and coverage of important events happening in the Pacific. I also want to expand the program that will interest all people from different ethnic backgrounds living in the CNMI, whether they are Chamorro, Filipino, Chinese, Korean.... I want MMV to be for everyone."

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NMI now has 84 Tuloy-Aral recipients

By **MARCONI CALINDAS**
REPORTER

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration has now hit a record of 84 individuals and groups in the CNMI who have come forward for this year's edition of the OWWA Tuloy-Aral Project. Last month, the number was at 68.

Last year, the Tuloy Aral Project in the CNMI ranked No. 1 among OWWA offices in the world after it managed to recruit just 31 foster parents. Right now, there is no word yet from the OWWA head office in the Philippines if the CNMI is once again leading the race for garnering the most foster children among other OWWA posts in the world.

In her breakdown of program beneficiaries in the Philippines, OWWA welfare officer Mary Dait said there are 59 children beneficiaries from the National Capital Region, five from the Cordillera Administrative Re-

gion, two from Region 1, three from Region 2, seven from Region 6, four from Region 7, one from Region 8, and three from Caraga province.

The Tuloy Aral Project is an OWWA project not only in the CNMI but also in other parts of the world where there are OWWA offices. It aims to help children of former overseas Filipino workers and other needy children in the Philippines fulfill their dream of continuing their education. With the money, the children will be provided school necessities such as notebooks, pens, pads, bags, and books, among others.

Dait said that the Tan Holdings Employees Volunteers Group comprises the most number of donors for this school year, with at least 35 members sponsoring less fortunate children in their elementary education. There are other Tan Holdings employees who are not members of the volunteer group who are also supporting the project by adopting foster

children by themselves.

Dait said that, through the \$100 sponsorship, the education of the beneficiaries would be smoother and more rewarding. This year, her office is looking at increasing the number of student recipients to 100.

"We'd like to thank the sponsors for their generosity," said Dait, adding that she is commending the assistance of volunteers and OWWA-OFW Support Group officers Dang Bernabe and

Dr. Gabe De Guzman for "really working hard to meet our target of 100 this year."

She said that her office is still open to those who want to extend their assistance and help to impoverished children in the Philippines. There are no requirements to extend help to the students, said Dait. When an individual has expressed his interest in helping out, the CNMI OWWA office calls the Manila Office so that it could allot a

recipient from the Philippines. The OWWA office will then notify the CNMI office to confirm the sponsorship.

OWWA head administrator Mariano D. Roque earlier said in a letter to prospective sponsors that OWWA launched the project in December 2004 for the schoolchildren to continue their elementary and high school education in the Philippines.

"The education of our youth being a responsibility of Filipinos

here and abroad, may I appeal on our sense of social responsibility as we work together in laying down the foundation of our country's future," Roque said.

She said that for only \$100, donors could be "foster parents of Tuloy-Aral Kids" for one school year.

For more information on how to extend assistance, donors can visit the OWWA office located at the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe.

Manila city council bans 'Da Vinci Code'

By **OLIVER TEVES**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Manila's city council on Thursday issued a resolution that bans the movie "The Da Vinci Code" in the Philippine capital, saying the film is an attack on the country's dominant Roman Catholic religion.

"This is the sentiment of the city of Manila," said council member Benjamin Asilo.

He said the ban starts Friday, the second day of the film's screening in the Philippines.

The movie "is undoubtedly offensive and contrary to established religious beliefs which cannot take precedence over the right of the persons involved in the film to freedom of expression," the resolution said.

It said the film also violates the penal code by being "contrary to morals, good customs and religious beliefs," and a 1993 Manila city ordinance prohibiting the showing of "obscene, indecent and immoral movies."

The Philippine capital is the heart of Metropolitan Manila, which includes 13 other cities and three municipalities that comprise its suburbs. No other municipal or city council in the metropolis has moved against the film.

Asilo, one of the resolution's principal authors, said the ban affects about 40 Manila theaters.

Asilo said none of at least 23 council members at Thursday's deliberation had seen the movie, but were informed that it was a "faithful adoption" of Dan Brown's best-selling novel by councilors who have read it.

He said he has not finished reading the book.

Catholic church leaders have denounced the movie as blasphemous, but did not call for a ban. Instead, they'd urged priests and community leaders to hold study and discussion groups on the divinity and celibacy of Jesus Christ, which are put in doubt in the movie.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines said the story "gives erroneous impressions" of fundamental Christian beliefs, the most serious being its assertions that Jesus was only human, and that he married Mary Magdalene and had children.

Philippine censors—the Movie Television Review and Classification Board—earlier in the week approved the show-

ing of the film uncut for adults, meaning age 18 or older.

A three-member panel of board said the movie did not merit an "X" rating because "it does not constitute a clear, express or direct attack on the Catholic church or religion," and does not libel or defame any person.

The Manila city council, however, thought otherwise and voted unanimously to approve the resolution, Asilo said.

"We expect that this will be contested in the courts, but just the same we have the power based on the city ordinance, so we stand by it," he said. "If no one speaks out, the city council will stand up on this issue not only regarding this movie, but other movies that we believe attack other religions."

LABOR FRONT

Appealing a ruling

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
REPORTER

Q: Can an affected alien worker file an appeal with the Department of Labor Secretary over a ruling issued by a Labor administrative hearing officer?

A: Any person or party affected by findings, orders, or decisions of the administrative hearing officers may appeal to the Labor Secretary within 15 days of issuance. If no appeal is made to the Secretary within 15 days, the findings, orders, or decisions shall be unreviewable administratively or judicially.

Q: What will happen to the appeal once the Labor Secretary completes his or her review of the case?

A: The Labor Secretary shall affirm, reverse, or modify the findings, order, or decision of the administrative hearing officers in writing within 10 days. The Secretary may remand under appropriate instructions all or part of the matter to the administrative hearing officers for further proceedings such as taking of additional evidence and the making of new or modified findings by reason of the additional evidence. According to the Alien Labor Rules and Regulations, the Secretary's decision shall constitute final agency action for purposes of judicial review.

Q: Can the Labor secretary suspend or bar an attorney for unethical conduct?

A: Yes. The Secretary may exclude parties, participants, and their representatives for refusal to comply with directions, continued use of delaying tactics, refusal to adhere to reasonable standards of orderly and ethical conduct, failure to act in good faith, or violation of the prohibition against ex parte communications.

Pursuant to the Alien Labor Rules and Regulations, any decision by the Secretary to suspend or bar an attorney or other representative shall constitute a final agency action and, as such, may be appealed. But no proceeding shall be delayed or suspended pending disposition of the appeal, provided, however, that the administrative hearing officer shall suspend the proceeding for a reasonable time for the purpose of enabling the party to obtain another attorney or representative.

Submit questions on labor issues to *Saipan Tribune* via e-mail at editor@saipantribune.com, or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 135. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the *Saipan Tribune's* office on the second floor of the CIC Centre on Beach Road, Garapan.



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Palace, Senate trade barbs on Charter change

By **GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Malacañang is peeved that the Senate has shut the door on a proposal to turn Congress into a Constituent Assembly to amend the Constitution just one day after it agreed to sit down with members of the House of Representatives to find ways out of the impasse on Charter change.

"It's a serious and basic procedural issue that the Senate and House panels should perhaps have discussed first before one of them made an interpretation and took a stand on. That's what the agreement... was all about," said Gabriel Claudio, the President's adviser on political affairs.

Senate President Franklin Drilon's quick retort was that the Palace should leave the Senate and House alone.

"Amending the Constitution is basically a legislative function," Drilon said. "Malacañang cannot approve or veto a resolution which will propose amendments to the Constitution."

He added: "Malacañang should not interfere because this is a legislative matter which, under the Constitution, is left to the Congress. Any doubt on the legality of the process we're suggesting will ultimately be settled in the Supreme Court, not by Malacañang."

Claudio said that during the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) meeting at the Palace last Tuesday, the senators agreed that they would discuss less contentious matters with their counterparts in the House before tackling the more difficult ones.

On Wednesday, the Senate committee on constitutional amendments chaired by Senator Richard Gordon declared that changing the Charter through a Constituent Assembly as espoused by the House was not among the options allowed by the Constitution.

"The agreement in LEDAC was to see first what substantive issues about the proposed amendments they can see eye-to-eye on. For example, making the Constitution's economic provisions more conducive to investments growth before tackling the contentious issue of how to amend or revise the Charter," said Claudio.

"Tapping the Gordon and (Rep. Constantino) Jaraula committees to dialog and bridge existing chasms should have been the first move. I hope

the two panels can still come together with open minds," Claudio said. "While the Gordon doctrine may be legally feasible, the question is whether it will open the Senate's doors to constitutional change and reform or keep them bolted."

The Senate has long questioned the House's contention that the Constitution can be changed through a constituent assembly where both chambers vote as one. While Malacañang is still hoping Congress will convene as a Constituent Assembly, the President has endorsed a parallel move to change the Constitution through a people's initiative.

Gordon is set to present the Senate's position to Jaraula, his counterpart in the House, in their first dialogue next Tuesday.

Meanwhile, opponents of

Charter change staged a "dancing protest" outside the Commission on Elections' central office in Manila yesterday afternoon to denounce the administration's moves to amend the Constitution.

The Black and White Movement led a group of 50 women in dancing the tango at the Comelec's gates in Intramuros area. The group is part of the larger STOP Cha-cha coalition launched last month.

The protesters, led by former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman and Teresita Deles, also a former presidential adviser, danced the tango with the help of real-life dance instructors to show them the difficult steps. They chanted "Oust Gloria" as they danced. *(with Juliet Labog-Javellana, Jerome Aning)*

Time reporter barred from leaving RP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine justice secretary said he has barred a Time magazine reporter in Manila from leaving the country in a bid to compel her to shed light on an alleged coup plot against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Nelly Sindayen was the author of a Time article on a Feb. 23 meeting among several opposition figures allegedly involved in a plot to oust Arroyo.

"She won't be arrested, but she must cooperate," Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales said late Thursday. "We just want to talk to her."

Gonzales said Sindayen's testimony would help the National Bureau of Investigation to complete its probe into the Feb. 24 foiled coup attempt, which the government said included disgruntled troops, communist rebels and civilian backers.

"We want to know why they (were) in that meeting," Gonzales said. "We will file charges against these individuals if I find that there is probable cause."

Sindayen, a Philippine national, could not immediately be reached for comment, but earlier told colleagues that she was standing by her story. Phone calls to Time magazine seeking comment were not immediately answered.

Sindayen has been covering the Philippines for Time for decades, including the downfall of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986.

U.S. Navy hospital ship to arrive in RP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Mercy will return to Southeast Asia later this week on a five-month humanitarian mission, a year after treating victims of the 2004 tsunami, the U.S. Embassy in Manila said Thursday.

The white-hulled vessel, one of two American hospital ships, will first stop in the volatile southern Philippines, where U.S. troops are building schools and roads and training Filipino soldiers in counterterrorism in efforts to combat al-Qaida-linked militants, the embassy said in a statement.

Other stops were expected to include Indonesia, Bangladesh and East Timor, where medical personnel will offer free treatment for civilians.

Last year, the Mercy, which boasts four X-ray rooms, a CAT scan unit and a dental surgery suite among other equipment, treated more than 107,000 patients, performed 466 surgeries and carried out 6,900 dental procedures in Indonesia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea, the Navy said.

Earthquakes mark Pacific-wide test of tsunami warning

By **JAYMES SONG**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

EWA BEACH, Hawaii (AP)—Dozens of nations joined the first ever Pacific-wide test of a tsunami-warning system, while earthquakes shook the geologically unstable region.

As the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Ewa Beach sent out bulletins warning of fictitious waves to more than 30 countries, participating governments tested their abilities to receive the warnings and how rapidly they could activate domestic emergency alert systems. Few reported problems, although Thailand officials said the drill revealed a crucial communication failure in their emergency plan.

Tuesday's drill was the first ocean-wide test since the center was established in 1965 and the first since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that left at least 216,000 people dead or missing and prompted international demands for improvement.

Brian Yanagi, deputy director of the International Tsunami Information Center called the drill a success overall, while noting that Tuvulu, a tiny island nation with a population of about 11,000, failed to receive any alerts.

"Because this is the first Pacific-wide test, we weren't sure what we would get," he said Wednesday. "It's better to test the system in a non-threatening environment and correct them during what I call 'peace time' versus when an actual real-world event hits."

Yanagi and others say a destructive tsunami is inevitable, considering the seismic activity in the vast Pacific, where most of the world's earthquakes and tsunamis occur.

Some areas also conducted mock evacuations, including the coastal village of Buhatan in the Philippines, where nearly 1,000 residents streamed out of their homes, tugging children

and struggling to carry bamboo mats, hammocks, coffee pots and roosters.

Several real earthquakes hit Indonesia, Tonga and New Zealand during the exercise. The largest, centered about 710 miles (1,142 kilometers) northeast of Auckland, New Zealand, generated a minor local tsunami that did not affect any populated areas, New Zealand national civil defense controller Mike O'Leary said. It did not affect the drill.

A magnitude-5.8 earthquake rattled Tonga as emergency authorities were broadcasting the simulated earthquake alerts. The National Disaster Office was "bombarded with questions" as the quake hit in the midst of the tsunami test, deputy director Mali'u Takai said.

At the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, the test began with a beeping sound signaling a mock magnitude 9.2 earthquake off the coast of Chile. Within four minutes, test warnings went out from the Hawaii facility, as well as the Alaska Tsunami Warning Center near Anchorage.

It was the first of nine bulletins issued throughout the day, warning of a fictitious wave that grew to as big as 30 feet (9 meters). Tsunamis generally travel at the speed of a commercial jet, but the center increased the speed four times, for the drill to finish in six hours.

The drill revealed communication problems in Thailand, where the National Disaster Warning Center was supposed to inform its five executive directors of the alert by SMS before informing other officials including the prime minister and provincial governors.

But the SMS messages failed to reach the five directors or were delayed for hours, said Dr. Cherdasak Virapat, the center's chief for International Coordination. He said other weaknesses involved dependence on telephones, and greater use



Filipino villagers climb uphill to safer grounds as they participate in the first-ever transpacific Tsunami warning drill at the far-flung coastal village of Buhatan in Santo Domingo town in Albay province, 340 kilometers (210 miles) southeast of Manila early Wednesday May 17, 2006.

of two-way radios was needed for tasks such as following the progress of evacuations.

In Melbourne, Australia, Chris Ryan of the National Meteorological and Oceanographic Centre said that except for some wrong numbers and the real earthquakes, "it all seems to have gone as planned."

Emergency responders in Hawaii tested their ability Tuesday to deal with an unlikely scenario: a category four hurricane

and a 30-foot (9-meter) tsunami approaching the islands at the same time.

"Theoretically, it's possible that you could have two disasters at the same time," state Civil Defense spokesman Ray Lovell said. "We might as well see how well we can handle this."

The Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004 prompted improvements in the Pacific warning system. Other areas, including the Indian Ocean,

Caribbean, Northeast Atlantic and the Mediterranean, are establishing their own warning centers modeled after the Hawaii facility.

The center, which falls under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, came under criticism for not reporting more aggressively on the Indian Ocean tsunami and recently upgraded to around-the-clock staffing after receiving additional funding.

PINOYSTYLE

What is 'pechayan' in Big Brother's house?

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
INQUIRER

What is "pechayan?" That's the term for "flirting" in Big Brother's house.

Lauren Dyogi, director of ABS-CBN's reality show, has expressed alarm over the teen housemates' preoccupation with romantic affairs. "Hopefully, we'll get to see different [relationship] dynamics in the coming weeks," Dyogi said. "We don't want to dwell on crushes."

According to "Pinoy Big Brother" resident psychologist Randy Dellosa, couplings are inevitable. "[But] I wish they'd focus more on friendship, which is longer-lasting and a good foundation for romantic relationships."

Dellosa corrected the impression that housemate Fred Payawan—booted on Saturday, the third eviction night, along with Joaqui Mendoza—had wanted to leave the house to join his rumored girlfriend and (earlier) evicted housemate Niña Jose. "She wasn't a strong enough reason," Dellosa told Inquirer Entertainment in a phone interview. "Fred still wanted to stay in the game."

Meanwhile, there's a budding romance between Matt Evans and Olyn Membian.

Some problems can't be solved by romance, though.

Jamilla Obispo, Dellosa noted, is not about to quit even if she misses her 11-month-old son, Miggy. "She only needs to be reminded that she's in the house precisely for her family—to help them financially," the counselor said.

Lea's daughter born in RP

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
INQUIRER

Singer-actress Lea Salonga, the Tony-winning star of "Miss Saigon," gave birth to a girl at noon Tuesday—three days before her due date.

Lea, who turned 35 in February, made certain that she would give birth in the Philippines. But the family requested the Inquirer not to name the hospital where she gave birth.

The mother "is doing well and taking a nap," but the father, Robert Chien, "is fussing nonstop about the baby," Lea's mom Ligaya told the Inquirer in a phone interview yesterday.

The baby, who will be christened Nicole Beverly, weighed 6.10 lb.

"The baby is a great Mother's Day gift for Lea and my mother-in-law," Robert said.

"She's a quiet baby, a good girl," Ligaya said of her first grandchild, who was sleeping in the same room as her mother. "She looks like a mixture of Lea and Robert. But she looks a lot like Lea when she was newly born. She's fair-skinned."

Promise to mom

Lea and Robert took their baby home Thursday.



Lea Salonga

"Lea chose Nicole as [her baby's] first name because she had always liked it," Ligaya said.

Robert confirmed this: "Lea likes the way it sounds."

"Her second name is Beverly, after Robert's mom, because it was a promise we made to his family when his mom died three years ago," Lea

told the Inquirer in an interview a month ago.

The birth of her daughter could very well be the toughest undertaking for Lea, who originated the role of Kim in "Miss Saigon," staged in the West End in London. She was only 17 when she won a Laurence Olivier award for her performance.

She later reprised the role on Broadway in New York, for which she won a Tony.

12 hours of labor

"It wasn't that bad really," Ligaya related. "It was her first child and she was given an epidural."

An epidural is the injection of an anesthetic into a person's spinal cord which partially numbs the abdomen and legs.

Lea started having contractions at 1 a.m., Ligaya recalled. "That's almost 12 hours of labor. She's very happy that she got her wish of delivering her first baby the natural way."

"Everything went smoothly," Rob-

ert recounted. "Nothing went wrong and she wasn't in a lot of pain. She's just tired. We're both very tired."

Lea, according to Ligaya, wanted to thank all her relatives and friends for all the prayers because she was able to get through this ordeal quietly in spite of the pain.

Made in RP

"It was made in the Philippines; it has to come out in the Philippines," she had said in an earlier interview. "My husband agreed with me on this. The great thing about giving birth in Manila is that we have a great support system here."

"I have lots of friends who are also mommies and they give me tips," she said. "When I'm getting stressed about something, they assure me, 'Don't worry about that, you'd be fine! I've been through that twice before. It's no big deal!'"

Lea also said she would like to physically recover first before doing any concerts or shows.

"I want to give myself the chance to get my old body back and regain my strength for singing. For personal plans, we'd like to take the baby to Los Angeles, to meet family members, both on my and Rob's side. This is a very, very exciting time," she said.

Anne Curtis gets back her groove ...with a lot of help from Luis Manzano

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
INQUIRER

Anne Curtis seems on the verge of tears as she pleads with reporters not to ask about her love life—specifically, her breakup five months ago with boyfriend of two years Paolo Araneta.

"As much as possible, I don't want to talk about it because Paolo is not in show biz and I respect his family."

But inquiring minds prevail. Was a third party involved? Did Paolo really knock up the other girl?

This makes the 21-year-old break her silence: "That's not true!"

And it's unfair to blame her hectic schedule as the culprit, she adds. "[My job] was never a factor. It was difficult because I seldom saw him. I was working very hard and he wasn't used to that."

She's a hard worker, she points out, because "I want to be financially stable. I don't want to depend on my future husband."

Anne adds that it was her former boyfriend, 10 years her senior, who encouraged her to strike while the iron was hot, save up and invest her earnings wisely.

"I learned a lot from him," she tells Inquirer Entertainment. "He's such a wise person. He had a good effect on me. He taught me not to splurge on shopping. To be professional. To manage my time well. To rest when I'm off from work. He helped me mature in a lot of ways. It was just that, sometimes it was too much for my age. But I will always love him."

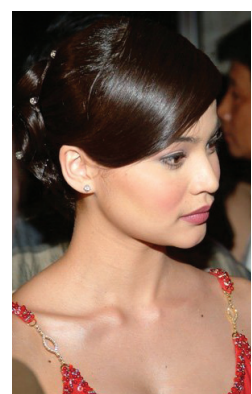
Back to school

She was also inspired to go back to school.

This summer, Anne enrolled as a high school senior at the College of Mount Carmel.

"Our principal assured me that I'm smart; it's just that I'm lazy," she says. "The night before an algebra exam, my nose bled. I asked myself: Is this because of the heat or the tension?"

Fortunately, "I aced the test, but I still have a lot of catching up to do because I stopped schooling for years."



Curtis

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TAKE FIVE

Face of a young winner

Sam Concepcion only shrugs when people ask about some viewers' negative reaction to his winning the grand prize in ABS-CBN's recently concluded talent search, "Little Big Star (Big Division)."

Sam's voice changed drastically in the course of the six-month competition (he's at that awkward stage, only 12 when he joined). The "critics" found Sam's performance inconsistent, and rooted for another contestant.

"Okay lang po sa akin 'yun. It's really like that in contests. There were people who wanted Gian (Carlo Barbona) or Charice (Pempengco) to win. But many wished me luck, too," a self-assured Sam told Inquirer Entertainment.

Prior to "LBS," Sam was in the youth-oriented program "Sineskwela" on ABS-CBN and then "Astig" on ABC 5. He hosted Nickelodeon's "Whacked" and Kids Choice Awards in 2004 and 2005.

His first big break came in 2002, when he played the young protagonist in "Sino Ka Ba, Jose Rizal?" a production of Musical Theater Philippines. Months later, Sam played Edmund Pevensie in Trumpets' highly successful production of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

Sam is managed by Stages, the same team behind the career of singer Christian Bautista.

The young champ is currently busy with other programs like "Super Inggo" and "Y Speak Live" on ABS-CBN. Officially, he said, Friday is his "rest" day, "pero nasisingitan pa rin po ng work."

And no, he hastily added, "I'm not complaining po."

And so it was on a Friday afternoon, clad in striped polo-shirt and ripped blue jeans, that Sam walked into the Inquirer office for this interview. If he felt like it was work, he didn't show. He was unguarded, engaging and bubbly... and well, refreshingly young.

He talked about the "cool stuff" he won from the contest, friends he made, and the girl of his dreams.

Did you personally pick your winning song ("I Can't Stand Still" from the musical "Footloose")?

Tito Carlo (Orosa), Tito Audie (Gemora), Tito David (Cosico, his manager) and my dad did. They're like a team.

Do you get formal training?

I've been with Trumpets since I was 8 or 9. Now, I'm 13. I was in Trumpets Playshop (workshop) for five years. I took up musical theater, street dancing and voice lessons with Teacher Lannie (Ligot), street dancing with the Maneuvres and Chinnie Nepumoceno.

I've done musicals—"The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe," "Mr. Noah's Big Boat"—and some corporate shows.

How did this help you in "Little Big Star"?

It helped a lot. I was comfortable on stage. It also helped in my singing and dancing. Although right now my voice is changing kaya mahirap.

How do you balance school and work?

I was absent a lot during "Little Big Star." My school (Christian Academy

of Manila) helped me cope [with it]. My teachers gave me make-up quizzes and make-up homework.

I'm an incoming second year student.

What did you win as "Little Big Star" champ?

P1 million—minus 20 percent tax—a trip to Hong Kong Disneyland, franchise of a line of cologne and gifts from sponsors worth P30,000.

What will you do with all that money?

Still planning. I still don't have it. I might buy a van or a car, or just save it.

How's your interaction with fellow contestants?

We'll still be part of "Little Big Star Season 2"—si Makisig (Morales), Kyle (Balili) and Rhap (Salazar) and then me, Charice and Gian. We'll be performing every Saturday.

Would you rather do TV or theater?

Pareho lang po.

Who are your mentors?

Tito Audie, Tito Carlo, Tito David and everyone from Stages.

What do they always tell you about performing?

To try to connect with the audience, to perform for them.

Did you expect to win?

Okay na rin po kami kahit third.

Who cheered for you the loudest?

My fans—the Samsters.

Are they mostly girls or boys? How old are they?

They're a mix. The youngest are 7 and 8 years old. Mas marami yung 13 years old. The oldest members are school principals, mommies and daddies. Global po ang membership. It has a website on Pinoy Exchange.

Weren't you the rapper on that Magi Sinigang sa Miso commercial?

Opo. I was 10 or 11 then. Mas marami pong commercials ang Daddy ko kaysa sa akin.



Sam Concepcion

Do you have brothers or sisters who also act?

Yes. We're four in the family, I'm the third. Everyone is involved in theater. My mom and my dad met at the Metropolitan Theater. My eldest brother, Red, is also a theater actor. My second brother, Kevin, is also in Trumpets Playshop. The youngest, Gem, 9, is in Playshop Kids.

Red studied musical theater in Singapore. He's teaching in Trumpets now.

'Are you a maid?'

By NINI VALERA
INQUIRER

This is one question that former MTV VJ Donita Rose has to answer almost every time she boards a cab in Singapore where she and her husband, Eric Villarama, and their son Joshua Paul reside.

"I have to explain to the cab driver that not all Filipinas in Singapore are maids," she said. "It happens to me so often (being mistaken for a maid), that I no longer get offended."

Donita, 32, has been shuttling between Singapore and Manila for eight years now, but it was only after she got married, three years ago, that she became a permanent resident of the island nation. The Villaramas now own a flat in one of the private developments there.

As permanent residents, the family enjoys "perks" from the government, including the Central Provident Fund: 18 percent of one's earnings go to a sort of government trust (and matched by the government) as a form of forced savings or retirement fund.

"That's [good] for my family," said Donita. "I strongly believe in saving for the future."

It's neither a perfect life, nor one that's mostly easy. Like most Filipinos living in Singapore, Donita has experienced some form of discrimination.

"Oh, we've had our share of that," she said, speaking for her husband as well as for herself. "Even when I was still with MTV, some people looked down on me."

But to her about 136,000 compatriots there, Donita—an actress and TV personality before she became a VJ—has clearly become a pleasant reminder of the country they left behind, if not altogether an inspiration.

She related an incident when a cab driver took her to a shopping mall near the park one Sunday, a day off for most Filipino maids. "I was not yet so popu-

lar then as a VJ. But when I stepped out of the cab, Filipinos recognized me and started calling my name. Hundreds of them rushed to come near me. I got scared. I thought there was going to be a stampede. Call me *mayabang* or what. But that's what I thought would happen. So I jumped back into the cab and had the driver take me some place else."

Sadness

Through all the excitement, Donita said, she had felt their sadness. It was a sadness she knew well, and one that she still feels every time she's away from home. Since she became host of GMA 7's "Mobile Kusina," for example, Donita had not seen her family for a month.

"I miss my son very much," she admitted. "My husband sends me pictures everyday. Plus, I web chat with him at the end of each day [so] it's been bearable."

Today, father and son are expected to arrive in Manila, and Donita is looking forward to that. "We've postponed mother's day to next Sunday," she said. "We're celebrating it on the show; Eric will be my guest. We'll both be cooking."

Salad freak

Donita, a confessed salad freak, said she's excited about the concoctions that she and Eric are serving up for the show. She confessed that she learned to really cook only after getting married, outside of occasional forays into the kitchen as a young girl.

She recalled, "I would save my allowance and cook something—usually American food—for the family for a special occasion. Since then, I've experimented a lot. But I've learned much in Singapore. I used to need cookbooks; now, I can do away with them."

How Nikki mends her broken heart

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
INQUIRER

Quite tellingly, Nikki Gil is listening these days to the soundtrack of the European movie, "Il Postino."

"It consists of Pablo Neruda's poems, as read by various artists, among them Sting, Madonna, Julia Roberts and Ethan Hawke," Nikki says.

Isn't it torture to listen to romantic verses while nursing a broken heart? It's been only two months since the 18-year-old Nikki parted ways with her boyfriend of eight months, Gabriel Valenciano.

"I really enjoy listening to [the soundtrack]," she confesses. "It allows me personal moments for contemplation."

Since that was her first relationship and her first breakup, do tears fall when she's alone?

"No naman," she says, but quickly backtracks. "Not that often, anyway. I'm a girl; it's a given that I'm sentimental."

She makes it clear: "I'm neither bitter nor angry. In fact, Gabriel and I have remained friends."

Mom Julie says the kids' relationship was "ideal" at the start because Gabriel's parents—singer Gary and manager Angeli—are "friends from church."

Nikki volunteers: "[His parents] are nice people. They've been very diplomatic about everything. As if nothing happened... nothing bad happened anyway. It has served its purpose. I'm wiser now and so is he."

The only downside are the inevitable intrigues—the most hurtful of which claims that she's using the breakup to promote herself, specifically her new single (under EMI), which is coincidentally titled "Forever Is Not as Long as It Used to Be."

"I'm not that shallow," she exclaims. "I cannot play around with matters of the heart."

On a positive note, she believes the sad chapter will help her grow as an artist. "That's why I always say I have no regrets. I sing with more heart now."

"Yes, it was a learning experience for her," Julie agrees. "They were just too young for a mature kind of relationship."

Is Nikki ready to fall in love again?

"No," she says, "but only because I'm busy with work and school. I don't think I can assume the responsibilities of a girlfriend as of now."

The girl's an incoming college junior, taking up English Literature at the Ateneo. She also recently signed up with Star Magic, ABS-CBN's talent center.

There are persistent rumors pointing to "Rounin" co-star and fellow Myx veejay Geoff Eigenmann as her latest suitor.

"It's best to ask him," she tells Inquirer Entertainment. "As far as I'm concerned, we're good friends. I've known him since high school. I'm very comfortable working and hanging out with him."

Former MTV VJ
Donita Rose.



OPINYON

'Kataksilan'

Remember that it was Popoy Lagman and not Satur Ocampo who did not particularly want Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to succeed Joseph Estrada during Edsa People Power II. Lagman's position was "Resign All," a slogan its marchers shouted on Mendiola Street and painted on walls, a call for both Estrada and Arroyo to resign to pave the way for new elections. Lagman's argument was that the entire Estrada administration, to which Arroyo belonged and had acquiesced by silence, if not by active cooperation, had betrayed the public trust. It should be abolished in full. He called for Hilario Davide to head a caretaker government and preside over snap elections.

It was the Bayan Muna party-list group that thought otherwise, agreeing to Arroyo's becoming president for many reasons. Not the least of it was that after playing it safe for a while, Arroyo had finally come out and plotted with them (they have proof of it, and frankly I cannot understand why they do not belabor the point) as well indeed as with the military to oust Estrada. She was an ally.

Ocampo's side won over Lagman's in the Left camp, the "Resign All" position being promptly shoved aside. Well, Bayan Muna might have won the battle, but it has lost the war.

"Kataksilan" [treachery] is the word government has used in a documentary purporting to show a Left-Right conspiracy against Arroyo, which presumably justified—and should justify in future—emergency rule. That is all very well, except for one thing. Who has betrayed whom?

Over the past year, no other group in this country has been persecuted with murderous zeal by government than Bayan Muna. The "murderous" is by no stretch of the imagination metaphorical. Last Saturday night, gunmen shot and killed Manuel Nardo in a karaoke bar in Pampanga province, bringing to an eye-popping 93 the number of Bayan Muna members killed since Arroyo took power, and to 123 the number of leftists

killed over the same period. Almost unbelievably, Nardo was the fourth leftist to die by a bullet in five days, turning the murders into a near-daily thing.

And despite the fact that the Supreme Court has junked Presidential Proclamation 1017, releasing the "Batasan 5" group of party-list representatives from their congressional prison, Raul Gonzalez, the secretary of justice, continues to dangle a legal sword over their heads. As things stand now though, that is probably the least of their worries. The first is the real sword dangling over their heads, as shown by the mounting body count of Bayan Muna members.

You can't have a graver case of treachery than that. But the treachery goes beyond Bayan Muna to the nation itself.

The reason for singling out Bayan Muna for persecution is easy to see. It is the "weakest link" in terms of public acceptance among those opposing Arroyo. It can be persecuted with near-impunity, the public being expected (not entirely wrongly) to not lift a finger to stop it in the belief (completely wrongly) the mayhem can happen only to "them" and not to "us." That was what the Nazis did in the 1930s: trot out a scapegoat in the Jews and Bolsheviks whom they lumped together as one. The Jews were presumably behind Bolshevism, a batty idea now but which the Nazis sold completely earnestly, and especially ferociously, at the time. It's a classic template for tyranny.

The case against the "Batasan 5" alone is a monumental case of selective retribution. At the very least, what makes it so is that Arroyo is the last person to have a right to rail against Left-Right conspirators. She was one.



There's The Rub

By CONRADO DE QUIROS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

At the very most, what makes it so is that the government has no lack of people to arrest and jail in the attempted "withdrawal of support" last February. There's more prima facie evidence against them. The "withdrawal of support" was never a secret. It openly and loudly advertised itself, appealing to the public for support. But the government cannot go after its leaders because it stands to prove only that their "coup" would have been the most popular coup in the world, having the blessings of most Filipinos. There are not enough jails in this country to hold those who want Arroyo out and are actively plotting to make it so.

But it's the killings that are truly terrifying. This isn't just routine murder, this is wholesale

murder your own comrades and gleefully toast it before the public, that public isn't going to send its lamentations to heaven, or to the world, when you yourself are murdered. But this is a case that goes beyond liking the victims or taking sides. This is a case where the victim is the nation itself.

What we're seeing today is not just the murder of leftists, it is the murder of human rights, the very thing we fought bitterly to retake from Marcos. As we saw then, the right to assemble, to freely express ourselves, indeed to continue to exist on this earth, is not a luxury, like tea, it is a necessity, like breath. What we're seeing today is not just the murder of activists, it is the murder of democracy, its chilling message being addressed not just to the activists but to anyone who would oppose a creeping dictatorship: "This is the fate

"Kataksilan" [treachery] is the word government has used in a documentary purporting to show a Left-Right conspiracy against Arroyo, which presumably justified—and should justify in future—emergency rule. That is all very well, except for one thing. Who has betrayed whom?

slaughter. More than journalists, it's the leftists that are being butchered like chickens, to quote a phrase used by one of them. And less than journalists, nobody is lifting a voice to protest it, or a finger to stop it. If there is anything more terrifying than those killings, it is the silence of the nation in the face of it.

Doubtless, they themselves are partly to blame for that lack of sympathy from the public. You

that awaits you." What we're seeing today is not just the murder of Bayan Muna members, it is the murder of all that is decent and good in this country. Look at Nazi Germany and see what happens to a people who agree to the killing of other people in the thought that it has nothing to do with them.

Ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for you. Ask not who lies in the red-draped coffin, you do.

History of mountain climbing in the Philippines

The successful Filipino ascent to Mt. Everest is something that swells national pride in the same way as when Manny Pacquiao brought down that bragging Mexican. The only difference is that there was no exclusive TV coverage this time, thus watching the two rival networks trying to outdo each other was very entertaining indeed. Then there is the claim by another Filipino who had scaled Everest earlier but didn't get the same attention because he was part of a team and wasn't covered by competing TV stations.

On May 29, 1953, Edmund Hillary and his guide, Tenzing Norgay, made the first successful attempt to scale the roof of the world. There was no satellite feed at the time, so the news was suppressed until June 2 to add spice to the coronation of Elizabeth II.

If you browse through the Internet, you will find the same questions Filipinos ask today: Who made it first? Hillary who headed the expedition naturally claimed to be first, while his guide, who presumably went ahead and pulled the white man up, ought to get the credit. When asked the same question, Tenzing in characteristic Asian politesse answered that they ascended "as a team." Thus, Hillary had to wait till Tenzing's death in 1986 to restate the claim that he was first.

While history books and historians will debate this topic for many years, they miss the point, which is the differ-

ence in perspective: East with Tenzing and West with Hillary. The Western mind wants to climb the mountain not just "because it's there" but also to plant the flag up in the summit, to conquer, to claim credit. The Eastern mind sees Everest as part of the universe, something to be scaled, to be known

If you browse through the Internet, you will find the same questions Filipinos ask today: Who made it first? Hillary who headed the expedition naturally claimed to be first, while his guide, who presumably went ahead and pulled the white man up, ought to get the credit.

and worshipped. I found a translation of Tenzing's account of that historic climb and was drawn to this part:

"I dug a hole in the snow and put down some small sacrifice, symbolic gifts that I had brought with me that our belief—my wife and I are Buddhists—demands. Preferably I wanted to sacrifice my clothes and equipment, but now that was not possible. Instead I left a few biscuits, some chocolates, and a blue pen. The blue pen had just a little piece left that my youngest daughter Nima had sent with me to sacrifice. It was a greeting from my family. Nima had earnestly asked me to put the pen on the summit of Mt. Everest. It was quite an ordinary pen, but one of my daughter's dearest things."

This paragraph alone, compared with Hillary's boasting, says a lot about the difference in cultures, the difference in perspective.

It is not well known that Tenzing's daughter Nima lived in the Philippines. Like her famous father, she was an accomplished mountain climber herself, scaling heights in her teens, yet when love called she married the least athletic of persons in the late graphic artist and book designer Noli Galang. When she got married, her father was not around to give her hand to her Filipino husband so that role was taken by Prince Peter of Greece. That nobody in the TV newsrooms knew this bit of information is a sad commentary on how little background research is being

done in television news.

While it was interesting to hear the rather emotional and naïve remarks of the relatives of the Filipino who climbed Everest, it would have added more perspective to get a sound byte from the daughter of Tenzing who not only married a Filipino but who knew Everest first-hand. What illumination will you get when reporters ask the parents and relatives back home what they think or feel about their now famous son climbing Everest?

Perhaps people should have tracked down Nima Tenzing-Galang or her children and asked about her humble blue pen that now rests in the bosom of Everest, a sacrificial gift given in 1953. Perhaps the TV reporters shivering on the foothills of Everest should ask what the Filipinos left on the roof of the world aside from our flag? If a Filipino could leave a gift on Everest, what would it be?

When the history of mountain climbing in the Philippines is written, there is a mine of late 19th-century materials to be read. Jose Rizal grew up literally under the shadow of Makiling, which could be seen from the back window of their Calamba home. It is said that in 1887, he climbed this mountain and

even raced up with his Spanish bodyguard Jose Taviel de Andrade. There was even a rumor circulating that when he reached the summit, Rizal planted the flag of Germany there. This was a time when people referred to him

as "Dr. Uliman," which was basically "Aleman" (German) mispronounced and believed to be a Muslim name. Because of this ascent to Makiling, the Spanish authorities had to make discreet inquiries to determine whether Rizal was a German spy. If he was a German citizen, then he did

not fall under Spanish jurisdiction.

There were so many absurd stories about Rizal even in his lifetime. And all this is magnified since he is a national hero who may be physically dead but alive in legend.

Rizal read "Reisen in den Philippinen" by Fedor Jagor, first published in Berlin in 1873. The book gives a first-hand account of the ascent to Iriga in the Bicol region.

Oh, so many unrelated bits of information ready for a future history of Philippine mountain climbing.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.



Looking Back

By AMBETH OCAMPO
INQUIRER

SAMU'T SARI

LIBERTY DONES



CONGRATULATIONS
Lanie Matillano, posing here with fiancé Ferdie Santos, gets a birthday treat during lunch Friday. The couple's wedding is set today.

LIBERTY DONES



LOYAL READER
Manong reads *Saipan Tribune* while on duty at Banzai Cliff.



MISSING GRAVEYARD
Toribio Trevias and son Kenneth pose for picture during a visit on Saipan after 50 years. The older Trevias, a U.S. Navy veteran, revisited the island to look for the graveyard of his day-old son, which turned out to be missing. The infant was buried here in 1956.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



ISLAND TOUR
Filipino tourists and their hosts visit Suicide Cliff.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



NATURE TREK
Pinoy visitors pose at the entrance of Grotto in Marpi.



GROTTO VISIT
Deng Angeles and her children, along with friends, went down to Grotto, a popular diving site.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SUICIDE CLIFF
Miko Moran, Vince Requeron, and friends toured the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



FUNNY IDOLS
Tan Holdings' Singing Idol finalists gather for a photo.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO